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ABSTRACT

Two sets of measures may improve the effective and equitable use of public funds for education in Togo. The first measure is related to the reduction of enrollment and the per capita costs of higher education. The costs of higher education borne by individuals and the state drain monies from the primary and secondary education sectors. The quantitative and qualitative development of primary education underpins the second measure. An expansion of "qualitative" public school programs for a quantitative increase in the number of students requires a concomitant infusion of government funding for worthwhile programs that would: provide training to school administrators to help them help teachers; form and furnish a school evaluation team; and facilitate regular evaluations of pupils' progress. (JAM)

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TOWARDS EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION FOR ALL IN TOGO

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For the past twenty years, the education system in Togo known a rapid expansion thanks to public funding. But since 1980, difficulties caused by economic readjustment have made it impossible to increase or to mobilize supplementary resources to improve the educational operational and financing modes. The paper presents and discusses two sets of measures to improve effectiveness and equity in the use of the public funds. The first is related to the reduction of University enrolment and in the per capita costs of higher education. The second is concerned with the quantitative and qualitative development of primary education.

INTRODUCTION

For the past 20 years, the Togolese education system has known a substantial development. The increase in the number of students at all levels of the system has been noticeable. This overall growth in numbers has been financially possible thanks to greater funding from the government, whose budget grew from 10% of the country's gross national product in 1970 to 26% in 1985. The share allocated to education increased from 17% of the national budget in 1970 to 20% in 1985.

Since about 1985, this situation has stopped. The easy past financing of the educational system has now come to an end, and one cannot expect the public resources for education to increase faster than the national product. The difficulties caused by economic readjustment will continue to limit the possibilities for growth. On the other hand, an annual growth rate of 3 - 4% can be estimated for the economy as a whole so consequently one may expect a comparable growth in the resources allotted to education.

It follows that if the structure of the educational system with its costs and its operational and financing modes remain as they are today, it will only be possible to maintain the current rates of schooling. It will be possible neither to increase them nor to mobilize supplementary resources to improve the quality of the education. Although the severity of the present

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budgetary restrictions is likely to continue at least for the foreseeable future, the political will to develop the country's human capital will nevertheless require that new measures be sought in order to improve effectiveness and equity in the use of the public funds actually available. With regard to the present situation of the Togolese educational system, it seems desirable to put forward suggestions that might enlighten political decisions regarding education. This paper is divided into two sections. Section one presents and discusses reduction in the admission rates to university and in the per capita costs of higher education as a possible remedial solution. Section two contains suggestions on how an increase in the quantity and quality of education at the primary school level could lead to more efficient and equitable education for all.

Efficient education means the development of a literate and skilled labor force, thus enabling the resources of the country to be properly exploited, agricultural and industrial productivity to be increased and in general, the standard of living of the people to be raised.

Equitable education involves providing equal educational opportunities for all and giving each person a voice in their own affairs and the chance to participate directly or through representatives, in decisions effecting their lives.

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I/- EDUCTION OF THE COSTS AND CONTROL OF UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT

Regarding the use of public funds in the educational system, it can be observed that if the costs per capita are rather low at the level of primary education, they are much higher at university level. For instance, the per capita costs of the University of Benin are 25% higher than those of the University of Dakar, whereas the per capita cost at primary level in Togo is 35% lower than that of primary education in Senegal. Taking these two figures into consideration, the percapita cost of higher education is 37,7 times than that of primary education in Togo, whereas the corresponding figure is 19,7 times in the case of Senegal.

When the various components of the per capita cost at University level are examined, we notice that the public subsidies to students in cash - scholarships and in Kind University services represent a substantial proportion of the total costs (48%), with a sum (304 000F CFA) approximately equal to the share of the pedagogic component (324 000F CFA).

If the comparison between the University of Benin and the University of Dakar is taken further, it can be noticed, still in terms of per capita GNP, that the cost of the pedagogic component of U.B. is similar to that of the University of Dakar. On the other hand, the difference between the two institutions is substantial as far as the social cost is concerned.

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It represents 3,1 times the per capita GNP in Togo and only 1,6% (i.e approximately half) in Senegal. The result is that the social cost represents less than one third of the total cost in Senegal and about half of it in Togo.

Extending the comparison to universities in Anglophone Africa, one discovers that on average, assistance to students there is far smaller since it only represents about 15% of the total cost. The last figure clearly shows that assistance to students in Togo is extremely generous. The consequences of such a situation can be measured in terms of efficiency in the us of public funds in education and equity in their distribution among the different components of the national community.

In terms of efficiency, the various forms of assistance to students obviously give school-leavers the incentive to register at university. In fact, economic difficulties are such that a school-leaver would find it extremely hard to find a job, which would be likely to be demanding and badly paid, if found. Under such difficult circumstances the school-leaver can easily become a virtual salaried government employee by enrolling at the University. In fact he will get the equivalent of a monthly salary higher than 25 000F CFA; It is ironic that while considerable constraints prevent the recruitment of civil servants, it is relatively easy to gain access to the subsidies provided to university students. Independently from those considerations, the consequence of the system is that too may school-leavers have access to university which

is both costly financially and detrimental to the quality of instruction as lecture-rooms are overcrowded with lowely capable and poorly motivated students. It is also economically and socially inefficient, sqince graduates are, and will continue to be produced in numbers far higher than the job market can absorb.

In terms of equity, the distribution of the student population in the different levels, and the distribution of the per capita costs among these levels result in the fact that the public resources alloted to education are concentrated in "the hands of a hanful of people". In primary education instance, the annual per capita cost is relatively low-16 000F CFA whereas in higher education it is 628 000F CFA. Thus, the 2,5% of an age group who acceed to university take 46,6% of the total credits alloted to education.

Furthermore, it is observed that salaried parents from sectors know more about and are more open to school than parents from traditional sectors. As a consequence, they, more than the latter, make their children go to school and keep them there longer. This results in a great over-representation of the better-off social categories at the university where the children of salaried parents from the modern sector represent 37% of the student population, whereas the parents of this category represent only 8% of the active population.

The present distribution of public resources for education is thus characterized by quite a significant degree of inequality. And a policy

of redistribution of the resources from higher education towards primary education, as the analysis in terms of efficiency has suggested, could if well followed, help improve equity.

One point is then to determine what forms the reductions in public credits alloted to higher education can take. Various schemes can be tried bearing in mind that the policies should first aim at reducing the number of students (quite likely in Lwa, Economics and Arts) and at the same time aim at reducing the volume of the per capita resources taken care of by the government.

The concrete measures likely to be implemented can include selection procedures for access to university, and measures which aim at increasing the students' individual contribution to the financing of their studies. The control of student admissions and the increase in individual private exepenses are different in nature but complementary. While the former can have immediate effects, the latter will have slow and long term effects. However the latter will have can impact on individual attitudes and on the demand.

Moreover these measures are likely to bring in more equity if their implementation is property organized. In fact, the impact on equity should not be seen solely from its structural point of view, i.e. through the clearly

positive effects of the budget savings made at university level and re-alloted to the primary level where a large number of chilfren, generally from poor families would benefit from them, children who would otherwise have had no access to education at all or at most to a bad one. Equity should also be examined from the point of view of its impact on the school-leaving population proper, for the increase in the individual costs taken care of by the students themselves may have negative effects on the registration of school-leavers from poor backgrounds.

However, this concern should be considerably stifled, for the potential difficulties related to equity among the school-leavers' population would appear only if : (1) the private contribution were to be in cash, (2) the payment were to be immediate, (3) the contribution were not modulated according to the characteristics of the student's family background. Specifically speaking, there would be little cause for concern if students were obliged to spend one year serving the community in national service in order to become eligible for a place in University. Similarly, there would be no cause for concern if a financial contribution to be paid by the students were planned but the payment deferred. It would be paid during the individuals' active lives, at a moment when they would draw from their own revenues to pay back to the community part of the financial benefit they had used during their studies. It would be a sort of loan proposed to the students of finance

their studies, a loan that would be refunded at a period when the possible financial difficulties of the student's family would not have much effect. This special "tax" taken from the graduates' salaries and which would be related to the fact that the society has paid for their degrees could, as a matter of fact, be extended to degree holders currently in active life, for a limited period of time.

Finally, a way of both globally increasing the financing by individuals, and at the same time taking matters of equity into account, while giving a financial dimension to the students' contribution would be to modulate this measure according to the economic circumstances of the student's family.

The basic objectives of the measures planned are intended to : (1) Avoid producing too large a number of degree holders ; (2) Improve the quality of the studies by limiting the number of students and by raising the academic standards of the student population. (3) Reduce the government's financial burden in higher education in order to gather resources needed to improve and develop education at primary level. (4) Make sure that the better prepared students for higher education enter university independently from their families' own financial resources.

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As reagrds those objectives, the following measures could be proposed.

(1) - A priori no secondary school graduate would be exluded from higher education but to obtain assistance a selection test would be organized. A specific number of places would be determined for each discipline in the first year. This number is to be in keeping with a reasonable anticipation of the number of jobs available in the medium term.

(2) - Study-fees of a substantial sum would be fixed. Those admitted to the initial selection would be exempt from paying those fees, independently of their social background. But those who are not admitted but who whish to carry on with higher education can do so, but they will have to pay each year.

(3) - Higher school graduates from poorer background admitted and exempted from paying study-fees, will receive full scholarships. Half scholarships will be granted to the less needy students, whereas students from relatively better-off backgrounds will get no scholarships from the government.

(4) - The University Services (C N O U) will therefore be at a price more related to the production costs. It might be possible to see that some of these services could be privatized.

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(5) - The other secondary schools graduates who which to register at university on the conditions offered to them, would spend a year of civil service, as primary school teachers after a short period of pedagogic training. During this year, they would assist an experienced teacher. This system will help reduce large class sizes. They would receive a small payment close to the minimum wage (20 000F CFA a month).

These different measures would eventually help the surplus pressure of university graduates on the job market, improve the quality of higher education and produce resources which would be useful for the improvement and development of primary education and which would otherwise be very difficult to get from other sources.

In any case one could save about 350 millions F CFA on the subsidies for scholarships to students studying in Togo, and 250 millions F CFA on the CNOU's budget. To this, one should add reductions in the government subsidies for studies abroad. About 250 millions F CFA could easily be saved to this effect.

The global figure on the resources that it would be possible to save a year from the public financing of higher education would be about 1,2 billions F CFA, which is quite substantial. This amount would help develop primary education quantitatively and qualitatively. To measure its impact in concrete

terms, one could say that 75 000 places could be created in primary school according to the current per capita cost related to primary education, and a further 1 400 teachers could be recruited. However the figures for schools and teachers and recruitment would probably be lower, as will pointed out in the second part of this study, part of the resources were used to improve quality rather than quantity at primary school level.

II/- QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Considering the current situation of primary education in Togo, the medium term objectives include both a quantitative expansion of the schooling population, and the improvement of the quality of institution priority being given to the latter objective. In fact, some teaching situations are not adequate for the pupils' acquisitions, and substantial improvements of these situations could be obtained through a network of coordinated actions likely to have very little effects on the financing of education.

As illustration, four types of complementary actions will be examined. They are related to the pedagogic, managerial and organizational dimensions of the educational system, and the more specific problem of pupils repeating the same class.

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During the last 10 years there has been a decrease in the average class size and a significant, increase qualification of the teachers. This has led to a substantial increase in the per capita cost without any visible positive effects on the quality of the products from the system.

In fact when the size of C.P.1. classes (1st year) in some areas went from 130 to 100 pupils, no substantial progress could be made since the pupils learn hardly anything in those classes. Similarly, it is known that below a certain limit (say 50 pupils) the decrease in class size barely affects individual acquisitions. It is therefore only for the classes formerly with 80 pupils whose sizes have come down to 50 pupils that positive effects would be expected.

The second element is related to the combination of the factors characterizing pedagogic organization. Apart from salaries, the government provides limited funding for primary schools, while parents are relied on for buying the books and the school materials needed by the children. There is an obvious lack of didactic and pedagogic materials available for teachers and pupils alike. This situation is harmful to the quality of the teaching, for it has been proved that there are strong cor-relations between the effects of the different factors involved in the teaching-learning situation. In other words it means that if, as is often the case, one element (here the didactic

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and pedagogic instruments) is insufficiently provided for, the effect of the others (teacher's qualification, class size) is also reduced. This, to some extent, explains why the pupils have not progressed in spite of the improvement of some of the system's elements (average class size, teachers' qualification).

The managerial dimension has to do with the motivation and the control of the actors involved in the educational process. In fact, just as it is important and desirable to have a good balance between the different characteristic aspects of the pedagogic process, so it is to consider this as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for obtaining an education of good quality i.e. an education in which the pupils reach a high standard according to the objectives assigned through the school curricula. The argument is that if the teaching should be given favorable conditions (qualified teachers, reasonable class size, adequate didactic and pedagogic materials), the teachers and the pupils should also invest their wills and their energies in the same objectives. But these two elements, the teaching conditions on the one hand, and the effective mobilisation of the actors' energy on the other hand, are also complementary. So, even the best conditions will be without any effects on the learners' acquisitions if the teachers are lax, and the pupils unmotivated. In the learning process, the teacher's energy is an essential factor for the intensity and relevence of his action, as the generator of knowledge, the

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the stimulator of the pupils and the controller of their work and acquisitions.

This energy is not spontaneously mobilized. Quite often, differences are observed among the acquisitions of pupils in a given teaching situation of the same concrete conditions such as academic and professionnal qualification of the teacher, class size, cognitive and social characteristics of the pupils, level of didactic and pedagogic materials supply. These differences are related to the individual teachers psychological characteristics and to their ability to involve themselves in the task they have. Secondly, it is also observed that the regular control of the teachers and what their pupils learn has a positive impact on the level of acquisitions of the pupils.

Among the means likely to be enforced in primary schools in Togo, the reinforcement or introductions of the following activities can be complementary instituted : (1) Training and instructions given to school heads to assist and control teachers in the performance of their daily activities. (2) Extension of the role and training of inspection staff (inspectors and pedagogic advisors). (3) Institution of regular evaluation of the pupils progress. The papers would be set up in order to trace progress through the primary school curriculum. The papers, would be marked following centralized organization, and the results used to show the teacher the educative actions to take , these results would be made public. Undoubtedly, this kind of activity would involve the improvement

and harmonization of the criteria for evaluation which naturally vary from one class to the other. This activity would require the development of a body of pedagogic advisors and would have financial implications necessitating about 3 to 4% of the current percapita cost. But even so, if preliminary experimentation were carried out through one academic year, covering a limited number of schools, one could expect the expenses to be cost efficient.

The reflection in the organizational dimension is based on two facts :

1°)- The average pupils-teachers ratio at national level (44,4 in 1984-85) is quite reasonable to get a satisfactory level of pedagogic and economic efficiency. It even seems rather positive compared with that of other sub-Saharan African countries.

2°)- There are very strong variations from one class to the other, of from one pedagogic region to the other. There are classes of less than 20 pupils at some places and classes of more than 90 pupils at others. This variation applies within the same levels (103 pupils on average in the C.P.1. (1) classes of Lome-Harbour inspectorate and 39 pupils on average in those of the northern

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(1) - : CP1 = First year in primary school
CP2 = Second year in primary school
CE1 = Third year in primary school
CE2 = Fourth year in primary school
CM1 = Fifth year in primary school
CM2 = Sixth and last year in primary school.

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pedagogic region). It also applies from one level to the other, with an average size decreasing as one goes from C.P.1 (national average 56,2 pupils in 1985-86) to CM2 (national average 23,8 pupils the same year)(2). Given the observations, two types of results of the pedagogic research can be usefully presented :

1°)- The first can be globally illustrated by a logistic type of decreasing relationship between the pupils' level of acquisition and class size, the other factors of the pedagogic organization and the pupils characteristics being taken for granted. In spite of the lack of definite quantitative figures available at the moment, one could easily see how profitable it would be to reduce the range variations in class size to around the national average. With the same volume of resources, the increase in the size of small classes would have only limited negative effects on the pupils' level of acquisitions, whereas the "gains in teachers achieved would help reduce the size of overloaded classes which would imply considerable gains for these pupils in terms of their progress.

This type of measure would improve the overall of education in Togolsese primary schools, without implying an increase in the per capita operation costs.

(2) : Informations and data for the present study come from the Statistiques Scolaires, 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88.

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2°)- A second result of the pedagogic research is that the younger the pupils are, the less autonomous they are in their learning process. Just as it is possible to make a group of pupils with a minimum level of school acquisitions work autonomously, similarly it is necessary to physically assist the younger ones in their initial learning process. It follows that ideally, the distribution of teachers should be done in such a way that the C.P. classes have the smallest sizes and the C.M., the largest. This is the very oppisite to what currently happens with overloaded C.P. classes and reasonably small sizes for C.M. classes which obviously does not lead to the best level of pedagogic and economic efficiency. It also explains the high number of pupils repeating their classes and dropping out at primary school level in Togo. It is therefore urgent to start on the necessary task of planning and organization in order to develop a programme that could globally consider the "school map" aiming at a better management of the balance between the teachers' population (which is rather mobile) and the pupils' population (rather static). A set of coordinated measures could be planned to reduce the variation in class size. In some instances classes including different levels could be created, in others the pupils of two schools geographically close to each other could be redistributed. Still in other cases, recruitments in alternate years could be organized, doubling the number of some overloaded classes or modifying the schools geographic areas of recruitment. The result would be a reduction in the number of both very small size and overloaded classes. The operation would help bring all or almost

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all the classes to a size of 35-55 pupils, with a complementary and essential principe that the C.P. classes in priority would be in the lower bracket of 35-40 pupils and the C.M. classes in the uppermost bracket (50-55 pupils).

These measures, based on detailed analyses would bring improvements in pedagogic terms and the overall quality of education at primary school level. They would have however to be followed by an appropriate training programme for teachers having classes of different levels. Problems related to school buildings, especially in urban areas, should also be closely examined.

Pupils repeating the same classes and dropping out is a common phenomenon in the Togolese educational system at large, especially in primary schools. The average repetition rate is about 35% and reaches 40% for the C.P. classes. These figures are obviously too high and show a malfunctioning of the educational system. This has negative effects both on the pedagogic operation and on the training of the pupils itself. The drop-outs are probably the result of unsuccessful schooling and represent wastage, while class repetitions lead to an important increase in the government's financial burden. This situation is probably a consequence of the insufficient quality of the education, and also of the lax administrative attitude towards pupils' repetition of their classes.

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If the measures suggested above were actually enforced, a regulation aiming at administratively reducing the rate of class repetition could be proposed. The rate should not be too low in order to keep a reasonable level of motivation to effort. It would however be sensibly lower than the present rates. Besides, there is a very strong argument in this respect that if the proposed measures are applied, substantial progresses in the pupils' acquisitions and thus a normative application of a level will result in a corresponding reduction of pupils' repetition of their classes. Furthermore, the regulating measures for the limitation of class repetition would entail research in evaluation and marking, and the psycho-sociological training of teacher to ensure on the one hand that teachers have a good appreciation of differences between pupils and on the other hand that there is a change in teachers' attitudes towards class repetition. Tentatively, it is desireble, if there should be concrete actions to improve the quality of the education, to take administrative measures limiting class repetition of a rate of 15% a priori, which is a rate significant lower than the current one (38%). This limitation of the number of class and would globally result in the reduction of the per capita costs of pupils in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

Among the different measures proposed, the first two (more books and pedagogic instruments on the one hand, and the extension of the role of

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inspection and pupils evaluation, on the other hand) engender financial needs. The third one (the redistribution of class size), a priori, does not have significant financial implications in terms of recurrent costs, whereas the fourth one (administrative limitation of class repetition) carries in itself reductions of the education costs, and enables an extension of the coverage of the whole system. Altogether, the first two measures could cost about 500 to 600 millions F CFA a year (1), whereas the fourth one could yield savings of approximately the same value.

It is worth recalling that if the measures proposed in the first section of this paper (regulation of the admission of students and the costs at the level of higher education) were actually enforced, 1,2 billions F CFA could be drained towards primary education. Half of these resources could then be allocated for the improvement of the quality of education, while substantial resources could be left for developing in quantity the coverage of the whole system.

(1) - 1 $US = 300F CFA.

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